Five Young Men

CHARLES REYNOLDS BROWN

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The Evangelical
School of Theology

Five Young Men

Five Young Men

Messages of Yesterday for
the Young Men of To-day

By
CHARLES REYNOLDS BROWN
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To the Young Men
of Yale
Whose friendship I have highly valued and in whose future I feel the warmest interest

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
NOV 11 1935

Preface

THESE addresses were given in the United Church on the Green, New Haven, Connecticut, on the Sunday evenings of Lent. The audiences were made up largely of men, many of them Yale students. I have brought the addresses together in this little book with the hope that they may have a certain value in their appeal to a wider audience of young men who in school and college, in their homes and in business life, are making those determinations which will decide the issue for them in those exacting years which are before us.

It has been given to us to live through one of the great crises of the world's history. In these days the hearts of men are being tried as by fire. If it is "wood, hay and stubble" that we are putting into our personal moral structures, into the purposes and methods which rule our industrial life and into our

national temper and fiber, then we may expect to see our work destroyed. The only qualities which will stand the test are those qualities which are symbolized by "gold, silver and precious stones."

C. R. B.

Yale University.

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I

The Young Man Who Was a Favourite Son

WHICH would you say is the harder to bear, adversity or prosperity? I am not sure. If I were a betting man I would not know on which horse to put my money.

The Bible says, "The destruction of the poor is their poverty." The narrowness and the meagreness of their lives, the lack of access to the highest interests seems to drive them oftentimes into the coarser forms of indulgence which are their undoing. The Bible also says, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." The millionaire who strives to be thoroughly Christian in all his attitudes and actions, in the secret desires which rule his own soul and in the relations he sustains to his fellow

men by reason of his wealth has a hard task. In every great city you will find the sons of millionaires falling down or flinging themselves away in thoughtless dissipation where the sons of toil are standing up and making good.

Here, for example, was a young man who was born on the sunny side of the street. He was the son of a rich man, and the favourite son. He was handsome—"It came to pass that Joseph was a goodly person and well favoured." He was habitually well dressed—"His father gave him a coat of many colours," which there in the Orient marked him as a young man of style. He had a vivid imagination and was a good talker. He was a young man of parts and his story was so interesting to those early Hebrews that here in the Book of Genesis thirteen full chapters are given to his personal history.

Let me notice three points in his career—first, his early unpopularity. You do not have to know Hebrew to understand why he was not as popular as Santa Claus. He was his father's favourite, which is a heavy load

for any child to bear. He lived in a family where there were four sets of children. His father had married two wives, Rachel who was handsome because he loved her, and Leah who was "tender-eyed," the Scripture says, because she was the daughter of his employer at that time and it was good business. There were also children who had been born to the two housemaids, according to the easy customs of that far-off time and place. Joseph was the son of Rachel, the favourite wife, and her favourite son. He wore the signs of this parental popularity in the gay coat of many colours. It was almost inevitable that he should become vain and overbearing.

He was also a talebearer. He looked down with unconcealed contempt upon his half-brothers who were the sons of the housemaids. "When Joseph was with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah he brought unto his father their evil report."

The tattler in the school and the squealer on the street come in, justly perhaps, for the contempt of their fellows. And whatever

allowance may be made for exceptional situations, the instinct which brands the tale-bearer as mean is mainly wholesome. It was One who knew what was in man who said, "Why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye and considerest not the beam in thine own eye? Judge not that ye be not judged." It is well for every man to sweep his own dooryard first before he begins to peddle stories as to the condition of his neighbour's dooryard.

This young man also had his full share of that conceit which thinks quite as highly of itself as it ought to think. He had his day-dreams, and this was well. I would not give a fig for the young fellow who does not see ahead of him masses of possible achievement in his particular line as high as the Sierras, if not quite so solid. But Joseph was soft and callow enough to tell his day-dreams to his fellows before he had done anything to indicate that those dreams might come true.

He told his brothers that he would be the tallest sheaf in the field and that they as lesser sheaves would come and make obei-

sance before him. He went still further and included his elders and betters in that general bowing down. He said, "Behold the sun and moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." He saw himself as the centre of the whole solar system and the rest of his family revolving about him as minor satellites. This day-dream of the ambitious young man was too much even for his indulgent father. "And Jacob rebuked him for his dream."

There you have all the necessary ingredients for a family explosion. When any young man is a favourite son, and a talebearer, and is filled to the eyes with self-conceit, he has in him the sulphur, the saltpeter, and the charcoal which enter into the composition of that sort of gunpowder which is liable to blow him up. You do not wonder that his brothers hated him. You are not surprised that when they saw him coming across the fields at Dothan they said with a sneer, "Behold, the dreamer cometh!"

We might naturally expect that they would conspire against him. They proposed to see

whether or not this conceited young tattler would become the tallest sheaf in the field and the centre of the whole solar system there in little Canaan. He had himself to thank for getting in wrong with his associates. He was not showing the qualities which make for peace and joy and advancement.

But in the second place he was sent early in life to the school of adversity. The place where he "prepared" was not much like "The Hill" or Hotchkiss; it bore no resemblance whatever to Andover or Exeter. He took all the grades in the commonest of all common schools. He was under the tuition of struggle and difficulty. He was a Freshman, then a Sophomore, a Junior and a Senior in the University of Experience, where the college colours are always "black and blue" because the lessons are learned by hard knocks. He learned obedience by the things that he suffered. He had the conceit taken out of him by being knocked down. He knew the meaning of the word "discipline," so that he could have spelled it and

parsed it forward and backwards and cross-wise.

He was tried in these three ways: first, by being sold as a slave boy into Egypt. His father sent him out to Dothan to see how his brothers were faring with their flocks. When they saw him coming across the plain they said, "Behold the dreamer! Let us cast him into a pit and see what will become of his dreams."

His brothers seized him and threw him into a deep well, where there was no water, intending to let him die in that horrible way. But when a company of Ishmaelites came along on their way to Egypt, a happier thought struck those men. Judah, who was always a thrifty soul, said, "What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood?" There is no money in murder. "Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites."

Here was the proverbial instinct, an eye for the main chance, already on its feet and doing business in the very childhood of that race, which has enjoyed such marked success in commercial pursuits. "Let us sell him

and let not our hand be upon him, for"—here emerges Mr. Pecksniff, who is much older than the time of Dickens—"for he is our brother and our flesh." His argument was plausible and the men drew Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites who carried him down into Egypt. Now the hands of the ten men were not stained with innocent blood and they were also twenty pieces of silver to the good.

How human and how modern were the mental processes of those crafty men! The man who decides to coin his brother's life into money instead of killing him with an axe has chosen so much milder a form of wrong-doing that he feels almost virtuous. "Let us not slay our brother"—that has an atrocious sound. It smacks of the doings of gunmen. Let not our hand be upon him for he is our flesh!

"But let us sell him"—this is so much more humane! Let us burn out his energy swiftly in the long hard hours of the steel mill to make our profits large. When he is exhausted before his time we can scrap him,

flinging him aside to make room for a fresh hand. Let us set the pace in the factory so sharp that the man in middle life cannot hold it—he will be compelled to drop out and tramp the streets in search of a job, while some younger man takes up his work. Let us keep the wages of the working girl so near the danger line that unless she is splendidly fortified with moral stamina she may be tempted after she has sold her days to greed to add to her income by selling her nights to shame.

Let not our hands be stained by the murder of our own flesh and blood—let us sell them in these more delicate and refined ways to increase the toll of profits! The voice of Judah is still heard in the land. There on the plains of Dothan this favourite son fell into the hands of greed and was sold as a slave boy into the land of Egypt.

He was also tested by the accusations of an evil-minded woman. When the Ishmaelites disposed of him in Egypt he was purchased by Potiphar, an officer in Pharaoh's guard. He was made a house servant. He

showed himself diligent and faithful and was advanced until he was the overseer of Potiphar's whole establishment.

He was a handsome young Hebrew, his complexion being much fairer than that of the dark-skinned Egyptians. He attracted the attention and won the admiration of Potiphar's wife, who was an evil-minded, faithless creature. As Joseph went about the house in the discharge of his duties she approached him repeatedly with her solicitations to evil.

He did not look her in the eye, as Billy Sunday suggests in his brisk way, and say, "Nothing doing." He said something infinitely better than that—"There is none greater in this house than I. My master hath kept back nothing from me but thee. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God."

He was not one of those men who do in Rome as the Romans do, who do in New York as Broadway does, even though that may mean a less wholesome type of conduct than they are accustomed to put up in their

home towns. He was a man of principle wherever he was placed. How can I sin against God!

Heaven be praised for men of principle and for men who are not afraid! A well-to-do Harvard student in one of the dormitories was shaving one morning when a wretched woman of the street slipped into his room through the door which he had left ajar. She shut the door and with her back against it said to him, "Give me fifty dollars instantly or I will scream for help." He looked around at her and said, "Yell away" —and went on with his shaving. He knew that his own life was clean. He had lived as a man of integrity and he felt that his statement would be taken anywhere against hers, because it was worth one hundred cents on the dollar. And she knew it—so she slunk out like a whipped cur. If he had compromised with her or had given her a dollar, he might have been in for endless trouble and disgrace.

But Joseph was not in Cambridge—he was in Egypt. He was not a well-known Har-

vard student—he was only a slave boy there in the house of his master. When this woman whom he had repulsed made her ugly, lying accusation against him she was believed and he was thrown into prison.

What indeed has now become of his dreams! He was a stranger in a strange land. He was a slave who had been jailed on an ugly charge. He must have felt that he was a long way from becoming the tallest sheaf in the field or the brightest star in the sky.

He was also tested by the ingratitude of those whom he had befriended. While he was in jail he did not for one hour give up his hope of advancement. He kept right on, attending the school of those instructors whose names are printed in the catalogue as Professor Adversity, Professor Difficulty and Doctor Discipline. He found them most capable teachers. They did not teach him much of that which is found in text-books, but they were teaching him to be a man, which after all is the main object of all education.

When Joseph was knocked down he did not wait for some Red Cross nurse to come with "first aid to the injured." He got right up and was there on the mat ready for the next round. And the young fellow with that sort of stuff in him learns, I care not how soft, callow and conceited he may have been in his "prep. school" days.

He was in prison, but since nothing better offered he would show himself the best prisoner behind those bars. He bore the false accusation of that lying woman without a word of recrimination lest he should injure the honour of his master, who had befriended him when he was in his employ. He spent his days not in laziness nor in vice, not in repining and dejection. He bore himself with such a thoughtful, unselfish spirit that he won the favour of the warden and was made a kind of overseer among the prisoners of his ward.

He won the regard and confidence of his fellow prisoners by his sympathetic interest in their welfare. When they were perplexed they came to him. The butler and the baker

from Pharaoh's household were imprisoned for some fault, and when they dreamed Joseph interpreted to them their dreams in skillful fashion. And when the butler was pardoned out a few days later, according to Joseph's prediction, he promised to remember his friend when once more he stood in Pharaoh's presence.

But after the manner of many he forgot all about his fellow prisoner in the joy of his own release. Joseph still lingered in jail. How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless friend! There in the jail he drank to the dregs the cup of ingratitude.

But read on, read on! The Lord has not let His voice fall yet. This is not a period—it is only a comma or semicolon. The mills of the gods grind slow, but they grind; and to every man who merits it a good grist comes at last. Read on!

There came a night when Pharaoh dreamed. The monarch saw seven fat cows come up out of the River Nile, which was the source of all fertility there in the Delta. Then he saw seven lean cows come up out

of the river and they ate up the seven fat cows and yet remained as lean and hungry as they had been before. In the morning Pharaoh called for his wise men and his magicians, but they could make nothing of it.

Then the chief butler remembered his fault. He remembered Joseph who had interpreted his own dream in yonder prison. He told Pharaoh of that strange experience, and the monarch promptly sent for this gifted young Hebrew. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business he shall stand before kings." Joseph had shown himself diligent in his business as a servant in the house of Potiphar, and as a prisoner he had made himself useful to the warden of the jail. Now he is summoned to stand before the ruler of all the land of Egypt.

He is the same man in name as when he walked across the fields of Dothan with his heart full of conceit, but how much he has learned! His coat of many colours has been replaced by the dull gray of the prison garb. He has acquired new moods and new methods and a finer quality of manhood. When

Pharaoh called upon him to interpret his strange dream, Joseph replied modestly, "It is not in me. Interpretations belong to God. And God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." It was in this mood of reverent, expectant awe that he undertook the interpretation of the monarch's dream.

How character ripens in adversity! Wheat ripens best under smiling, sunny skies, but the rigorous winter of hardship and struggle is demanded for the maturing of those fine qualities of mind and heart which make up character at its best. Men have found by experience that it is impossible to produce apples of the choicest flavour where there is no frost. I am quite sure that the best type of human excellence cannot be secured without frost. "He is testing me," Job said, when all those troubles fell upon him; "He knows the way that I take and when He has tried me I shall come forth as gold."

Here was a young man who in early life had been a spoiled child, a conceited prig, a talebearer among his fellows, but in the hard school of adversity he had learned to labour

and to wait. He could now endure as seeing One who is invisible.

The law of gravitation never forgets anything, never overlooks anything. It matters not whether it is a pound of feathers or a ton of lead or a planet, the power of gravitation is right there attending to business. If a man falls out of a fifth story window in New York, in Constantinople, or in Calcutta, the law of gravitation is there and the man gets hurt. The moral order never forgets anything, never overlooks anything. What men sow, they reap, though the harvest be long delayed. If they sow to the flesh, sometime, somewhere they go out with bruised hands and bleeding hearts to reap corruption. When they sow to the spirit they will in the same inevitable way reap life eternal. Here at last the man of purpose and of faith is reaping the results of discipline bravely met and nobly borne.

This young man owed his ultimate success to the fact that he was a man of vision. There is a certain fascination in the story of any life which rises from obscurity to emi-

nence. Whether the path lies from the log cabin of a rail splitter to the White House, from the lowly work of the tanyard to the head of victorious armies, or from a pit on the plains of Dothan to a palace on the banks of the Nile, there is something in the human heart which responds to the unfolding of such a life-story.

The Hebrews were happy in relating how men of their race had made their way up to places of honour at alien courts through the sheer force of their own personal ability. Here was Joseph coming up out of the prison house to the right hand of Pharaoh! Here was Daniel preferred above the other presidents and princes at the court of Darius! Here was Benjamin Disraeli belonging to a race formerly disfranchised in England becoming at last Prime Minister of Her Most Christian Majesty Queen Victoria! Let every man who looks down upon some lowly life beware lest he despise what God has blessed!

Here was a young man who had vision! He saw things. He did not merely "look,"

as would some dog that bays the moon. When he walked across the plains of Dothan his mind was not altogether upon wool and mutton—he was already dreaming of high achievement in his future years. When he was thrown into the pit and sold into slavery his brain was busy with the stars. When he faced temptation he saw it all with the eye of faith—how could he do this great wickedness and sin against God. And when he was confronted with a problem confessedly too hard for him he lifted up his eyes to the hills from whence cometh help. "It is not in me. The interpretation of life belongs to God."

He was only seventeen years old when he walked across the fields that day to the place where his brothers kept their flocks. Now he was thirty. He had increased in stature, in wisdom and in favour with God and man. It had taken thirteen long years to add those cubits to his height, but they had been well spent. The Almighty takes His time in working out His finer effects. The spoiled child, the censorious talebearer, the callow, con-

ceited youth must be wrought upon by the beat and play of human life. When any man has vision and faith there is a divinity which shapes his ends, rough-hewn though they be by doting fathers and envious brothers, by false accusers, and by ungrateful companions. When a man is faced right, all things, no matter what shape they bear, will ultimately work together for his good.

"A man in whom the spirit of God is"—that was Pharaoh's verdict when Joseph had skillfully interpreted his dream, indicating that the seven fat cows coming up out of the Nile meant seven years of plenty in the land of Egypt, and that the seven lean cows following them and devouring them meant seven years of famine, which would tax the resources of Pharaoh's empire in feeding the hungry people. And when the monarch had listened to the wise words, had sensed the humane spirit of this young Hebrew, and had seen the look of faith upon his face, he felt that no other man would be so competent to become High Commissioner of the Food Supply there in the land of Egypt. Thus

Joseph was set in a place of authority at Pharaoh's right hand.

His dreams are coming true! He had framed his first anticipations out of sheaves. Then his mind began to be busy with the stars. He was destined to have a part in preserving the life of his own Hebrew race and a part in that moral movement which would outlast the stars themselves. Through all those long hard years which lay between the pit of Dothan and the palace of Pharaoh, he was sustained by that vision of things divine which shone perpetually in his sky.

"A man in whom the spirit of God is"—here is the ultimate reason for every splendid advance! Here is the ultimate reason why any man is able to rise from those lower levels where wool and mutton are the main considerations to those higher levels where he becomes a trusted implement in the hand of God for a service that will endure.

The young man was a man of faith. He had faith in God. He had faith in his fellows, as he showed when he generously forgave the brothers who had wronged him,

having them as ruler of Egypt utterly in his power. He had faith in himself because the spirit of God dwelt in his heart. And it matters not whether it is Egypt or Connecticut, the eighteenth century before Christ or the twentieth century after Christ, it is "by faith" that men work righteousness and obtain promises, wax valiant in fight and beat back the armies of aliens.

In the long run the world belongs to the idealist. The ultimate shaping of its life is in the hands of the men who walk the busy streets and dusty lanes with their feet on the ground but with their heads and their hearts among the stars. The men of vision and faith sometimes lose a skirmish; now and then they are defeated in a battle; but when the war is fought through to a finish they are on the winning side.

Here in this company there may be many a favourite son. You are inexpressibly dear to the hearts of those parents. Their thoughts, their prayers and their efforts are all reaching out for the best things for you. They do not know and you do not know what hard

tests may lie ahead. You too may be sent for thirteen long years to the school of adversity, but if the spirit of God is in your heart, if you have faith, a vital and personal faith in Jesus Christ, if you have caught the vision of what life may be made to mean at its best, then it lies within your power also to achieve.

II

The Young Man Who Was an Athlete

WHAT a roomy place the Bible is! It is not filled up with model men and women. It is not filled up with nice little boys and girls, all neat and sweet, good enough to be angels right off with no alterations. It is peopled with imperfect, blundering folk like ourselves.

Some of these samples of human life are offered to us for our imitation, and some by way of warning. The wide variety exhibited shows how God can use and bless the better elements in many a life where the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest. The divine purpose shows an amazing measure of hospitality. "The love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind."

We come for example to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. It is the roll call of men of faith. "By faith Abel offered unto

God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death because he walked with God. By faith Noah built an ark for the saving of his house. By faith Abraham went out to found a nation in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed, not knowing whither he went. "By faith Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

"And what shall I say more," the author remarks in passing. "Time would fail me to tell of all the men who by faith subdued kingdoms and wrought righteousness, obtained promises and put to flight the armies of evil, Gideon and Barak, Samson and Jephthah."

Samson! The very presence of his name in this catalogue of moral heroes all but takes away one's breath. What does this big husky fellow, this wild, fun-loving chap have to do with the working out of the divine purpose for the race? We are as much surprised as we would be if we had found Jack Johnson undertaking to preach the Gospel,

or John L. Sullivan trying to be elected as a professor in Princeton Theological Seminary. Samson as a hero of the faith! Surely this is "Saul among the prophets." We will be interested in studying the life of this young man who had the build and the mood of an athlete.

He had in his youth the strength and promise of a mighty man. He caught a young lion and seizing it by its jaws ripped it apart as an ordinary man would have rent a kid. He caught up the jaw-bone of an ass and slew heaps and heaps of his enemies in personal combat. He carried off the gates of a city and hid them on the top of a hill as if he had been celebrating Hallowe'en. He would have been the making of any football team. If he had furnished the forward thrust of a flying wedge it would have gone through any line that might have stood in its way.

It would not be easy to draw a hard and fast line here between the prose and the poetry of these narratives. Something of history and a great deal of folk-lore undoubtedly are blended in these stirring tales.

There are many passages in the earlier portions of the Bible which have more value for the history of ideas than for the history of actual occurrence. They are full of truth though they may not always conform to sober fact. They are parables rather than records.

But we may be sure that this interesting young giant had something more than mere physical prowess. He had in him some of the elements of genuine leadership else he would not have been regarded as a judge and a leader in Israel, raised up for a great work. The people would never have woven these stories about his name nor enrolled him among the moral heroes of their race had he not possessed some of the elements of real strength. He had in him the sense of power —it is a quality which all men covet and all women adore.

He had a keen sense of the joy of living. We are glad that the element of humour was not left out of the Bible. It would not have been so human, so complete, so unmistakably "the Book of Books" had this been lacking.

I am sure that the Almighty has a sense of humour. He must have or He never would have created pelicans and monkeys. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh," we read—and He must have laughed when He made these curious creatures. He was willing to give this fun-loving Samson a place on the roster of the Army of the Lord.

Samson stands out on the pages of Scripture as a big, overgrown, rollicking boy looking upon life as one huge joke. His major study was to turn the laugh on the dull-witted, slow-going Philistines. He tore the young lion and when a swarm of bees had made honey in the carcass Samson made this riddle,—"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." He propounded his riddle to the Philistines and made them a bet that they could not guess it. And when they wheedled the answer to the riddle out of Samson's wife he retorted upon them in coarse fashion, "If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye would not have guessed my riddle."

He carried off the gates of the city of Gaza and hid them. He caught foxes and tied firebrands to their tails and then turned them loose in the ripe wheat fields of the Philistines, roaring aloud over the havoc they made. He slew his enemies with the jaw-bone of an ass and then made a clever pun (which the Hebrew reveals) upon the name of his homely weapon.

He was the joker of the pack. Time and again in the days of his power he was able to take the trick. When he came to die that element of grim humour was still in his heart. He had lost his strength because he had slept for a night with his head in the lap of his enemy. His foes had put out his eyes and had made him to grind as a slave in one of their mills. Now he was brought as a kind of paid jester to one of their feasts to make fun for the party.

There in the house of his foes, holding fast to a door-post he prayed in grim fashion that his former strength might for a moment be renewed, "that he might be avenged upon his enemies for the loss *of one of his two*

eyes." He would leave the rest of the account to be settled later. When he had them roaring with laughter at some of his sallies, he pulled down the house upon their heads and killed them all, perishing himself in the disaster. He was full of humour and had a deep sense of the joy of living.

He was a strange mixture of good and evil. Here was a blend of weakness and of strength! Here was the baser metal mingled as an unworthy alloy with much that was fine gold. "Samson got the laugh on the Philistine men," as William R. Richards said once in Battell Chapel, "but their sisters avenged themselves on him by making a slave, a tool, and a fool of him. This old writer tells his story straight on without stopping to moralize. But where can you find a better sermon on the need of personal purity? Of the two forms of sin which especially assail young men, Samson might guard us from one by way of example, and from the other by way of warning. Touching no wine, for he was a Nazarite from his birth, he excelled in strength. But placing

his head in the lap of a false woman whose name was Delilah, there came to him weakness, blindness, the prison house, and the grave."

He refused the cup which cheers and also inebriates, but he gave his heart and his strength to that alluring enemy of the divine purpose who ruined him. Where a young man is a physical weakling, then if his mind is dull and his heart mean, he is at least all of a piece. He is consistent in his make-up. Where his body is strong as was the body of this young giant, revealing in every movement of it that joy and vigour which come with abundance of life, then if his mental and moral life are weak and thin, there is something tragic in that walking lie. The outward man promises so much, but the inward man is a wail of disappointment.

"The Philistines took him," is the terse comment of the writer upon Samson's unhappy career. But his sins had already taken him captive. He had become the bond servant of his own passions. He was already a slave through his lack of self-control.

"The wages of sin is death"—if you doubt it read through to the end the story of any man who is headed wrong and keeps going in that direction. You will find the word "Death" written over against his name in five capital letters. Read the story of this young man who in his youth was so "strong and sunny," as his name in the original has it. When you read on you presently find him dead in his eyes, as he gropes his way about the prison house in the land of the Philistines. He is dead in his muscles as he weakly turns the wheels of a mill, which was the work commonly assigned to women in those rude tribes. He is dead in reputation—the fool and the jester brought in to make sport at the table of his captors! He is dead in his soul for he is unaware that the Lord has departed from him. The wages of sin is death. Whether pay day comes the following Saturday night or at the end of the year, or in the final outcome, in every case the sorry result will be the same.

We are compelled to say that Samson's life was a tragedy because he failed at these

three points. He never learned to take life seriously. The joker is not the best card in the pack, except by an arbitrary rule—and in all the better games at cards, the joker is thrown out. When all is said and done, life is serious business. The humour, the amusement, the recreation are only the sauce on the table to give an added zest and relish—they are not the roast beef and potatoes. You cannot live on them nor by them. The man who laughs and laughs loudly and laughs at everything will have the laugh turned on him. The very fact that he has never brought his life under the power of a serious, definite, compelling purpose will cause him to be left far in the rear by those men who waken up early to the fact that the world is not to be taken as a joke.

There was a certain joy no doubt in carrying off the gates of Gaza. I can recall certain episodes on the evening of the thirty-first of October when the carrying off of the gates of some neighbour seemed to me to fill the cup of life to the brim. There is a certain joy in getting a cow up into the

pulpit of the College Chapel or into the belfry of some church on a dark night—the young fellow who has never helped to solve that problem in physics has missed something. There is a time to read the paper we call "Life," and to see some man on the stage who can be as funny as William Collier. Where all these are the diversions of a mind devoted to serious ends, where they are only the by-product of human interest, they have a rightful place in our régime.

But their lines are soon spoken, and the stage must be cleared for those who have something of more moment to tell. "How much do you really care?" the world is asking. "How ready are you to think intently upon something which has no more fun in it than a page of figures or an array of unyielding facts? How far are you ready to bend all the best energies of body, brain and heart to the gaining of some worthy end? How completely have you set your heart upon that which is vital?" Your answer to these questions will in large measure tell the story of your future achievement.

This young man failed because he had not acquired the habit of persistence. His big deeds were all done in a hurry, and they were soon over. He carried off the gates of the city in ten minutes. He tore the young lion apart in an instant. He slaughtered the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass in less time than I am taking in telling it. He tied torches to the tails of the foxes and let them loose in the wheat fields in a careless half hour of thoughtless sport. You do not find the man binding up a lifetime of effort into a moral unit by an all-inclusive and dominant intention. He was never ready to work and to keep on working until achievement of a worthy sort should crown his effort.

You cannot drive a long nail in to the head by hammering around all over the board. You must hit the nail on the head and keep on hitting it on the head until you have sent it home. You cannot sink the shaft of a mine by digging all around over the mountainside. You must dig in one place and keep on digging in one place persistently until you have sunk your shaft to

the vein of ore. You cannot build a life that is worthy to be the life of a child of God unless you gird yourself for that persistent effort which lies between you and the goal upon which you have set your heart. It cannot be done in an hour, or in a day, or in a year. The hard task of presenting to Him a life which will bear His own eye and win His approval will mortgage the best strength of all your best years.

You may have the body of an athlete. You may have a mind with splendid capacity in it for real achievement. You may have a heart which reacts as promptly as gunpowder when a spark of genuine aspiration is applied to it. You may have all these—I hope you have—but unless you have learned the high art of staying by, of holding on, of keeping at it no matter what comes, you are doomed to defeat.

How often you see a young man of generous impulse, of kindly disposition, like Esau, faltering and failing as the years come and go until at last he is little better than a vagabond upon the face of the earth. How often

you find a man of purpose and persistence, like Jacob, with many an unfortunate trait in him, with a heavy moral handicap to overcome, finally winning out by the sheer force of his spiritual tenacity. "Be thou faithful unto death," the promise has it, "and I will give thee the crown of life." The crown is held in reserve for those who persist clear through to the end.

This young man failed because he lacked the favour of God. In the early stages of his career we read of a divine element in his life. "The woman bare a son and called his name Samson, and the Lord blessed him. And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him" for those deeds of valour.

However we may interpret these expressions the fact is plain that so long as he kept his life clean and true he had the sense of divine reinforcement making him equal to the tasks which fell to his lot. Then there came a time when by his own actions he forfeited all this. He became as weak as a rag in the face of temptation, in the presence of duty, in some great opportunity for valiant

effort which opened before him. And he did not realize how weak he was until he went down in defeat. "He wist not that the Lord had departed from him."

The spirit of self-indulgence, I care not whether it goes straight for the coarse sins of the flesh or moves in more refined ways towards the life of selfish ease and barren culture, will take the iron out of a man's blood. It will take the vim out of his muscles, the power to hold fast out of his will.

The man who saves his life for his own personal gratification will soon find that he has no life to save. That which makes life life is gone. It is the habit of self-control, the spirit of self-surrender to the will of God, the purpose of self-dedication to the highest ends in sight, which puts power into the thrust of each man's effort.

The circular letter which Lord Kitchener, head of the War Office, sent to every British soldier when the English troops were ordered to the Continent reads like a classic:

"You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King. The honour of the British Army

depends upon your individual conduct. You have a task to perform which will need courage, energy, and patience. Be on your guard against excesses. You will find temptation both in women and in wine. Resist both and do your duty bravely. Fear God. Honour the King.

"(Signed) KITCHENER."

Hang those great words up in your mind! Hang the picture of that strong, stern, brave man in your heart that you too may wear the cross of honour.

If it is good for men to be sober and clean in war time, why not at all times? Have we not sore need of these same qualities in the more exacting pursuits of peace? Every man who is worthy of the name of man is set to guard some sacred interest, though he carries neither gun nor sword.

Here is the everlasting fight being waged three hundred and sixty-five days in the year —and it is waged year in and year out for there is no discharge in that war—against hunger and cold, against disease and death, against poverty and crime! Why not have men at their best in the mill and in the mine, on the

farm and in the factory, in the counting-room and in the places of trade? The armies which are sent forth to save, to feed, and to clothe men's lives, no less than the armies of bloodshed have need of the same high discipline. They, too, are crippled and broken, they are driven back and hurled to defeat by those moral foes which march under the banner of self-indulgence.

Here is an evil traffic which flaunts its wares in our faces in every city block where the forces of righteousness have not risen in strength to cast it out. But we have fallen upon times when the economic forces are lining up solidly with the verdict of medical science and the power of religion in a relentless opposition to the use of alcohol as a beverage. In these days the man who thinks more of his job than he does of his grog has the floor.

The wise railroad managers know full well that a tippler in the cab of an engine or at the flagman's post means sooner or later a frightful accident with loss of property and life. The owners of intricate and delicate

machinery in the great factories know that placing in control men whose brains have been clogged and drugged with liquor is as foolish as throwing sand into the ball bearings. "Safety First" means "Sober First." The taxpayers are becoming no less insistent —they have learned that the open saloon means added crime and poverty where they must foot the bills. Decent people have grown tired of cleaning up the muss and the dirt occasioned by the rum sellers. The moral forces of the community recognize the fact that the liquor business allies itself openly with immoralities of every sort. The people are saying in state after state, in country after country, "Time's up! You have failed to show your right to be! You will have to go." The habit of indulgence in that which robs men of strength, of intelligence, of conscience, finds every good man's hand against it.

We read in this strange story that Samson's strength was in his hair. When his locks were cut away by the fair and false hand of evil he was as weak as a woman.

How much of sober history and how much of poetic allegory there may be in these glowing statements it is not easy to say. But the moral content of this record is clear. When those slender and delicate lines of contact which, as he believed according to his vow as a Nazarite, bound him in loyalty to the source of all strength, were broken, then his splendid prowess was no more. "It is that little half-inch rim of the tree where the sap runs up to the sun that makes the tree alive or dead." However you phrase it in the clearer light of this twentieth century of ours, guard with all diligence those lines of communication between your own inner life and the life of God. Maintain within yourself that faith and hope and love which will bring to you your own full measure of strength and joy.

The dull, sad picture of this defeated man is not wholly unrelieved by any brighter touch. When he was shorn of his strength, robbed of his honour, stained in the quality of his manhood, we read, "Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shorn."

It was only a gleam of hope, but it was a gleam. It was a far-off promise of that divine redemptive process which has become the basis of our trust. His claim upon the divine favour and his hold upon the sources of strength were not utterly forfeited by his acts of evil-doing. His hair began to grow again and a hope of moral recovery was begotten in his heart. "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves; but if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Let me close with this plain, straight word of appeal as strong as I can make it! You need God in your life. You need Him not as a philosophical belief touching the origin and ground of all finite existence; not as a mere dogma to be written at the head of your Confession of Faith; not as a name to be introduced into some liturgy which you may occasionally employ. You need God as a present, personal and profound experience. To know Him is to live, and to live well.

It was Phillips Brooks who said once to an

audience of Harvard men, "Here is the last great certainty, be sure of God! By simple, loving worship, by continual obedience, by keeping yourself pure even as He is pure, creep close to Him, keep close to Him, and in the end nothing can overthrow you."

III

The Young Man Who Became King

IN some wise way when the door of opportunity opens upon a trying situation there comes forth a man of sufficient size to perform the task. When the time is ripe for the Protestant Reformation Martin Luther is ready and walks in. When the day arrives for Napoleon Bonaparte to be sent to St. Helena and the peace of Europe restored, the Duke of Wellington, representing British tenacity, is ready. When the hour has struck for American slavery to be destroyed by words and laws and grape-shot, William Lloyd Garrison and Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant are ready. Back of every emergency God waits. He has His great right hand full of men and when the fullness of time is come He brings upon the scene His own appointed man.

Here in a very old book is the story of the

greatest king that Israel ever had! The House of Tudor in England, the House of Hohenzollern in Germany or the late House of the Romanoffs in Russia, never had such a hold upon the popular imagination and affection as did "the house and lineage of David" upon the hearts of the Hebrews. The One who was to be born "King of kings and Lord of lords" to reign forever and ever was to come from "the house and lineage of David."

But how was this country boy with rough hands and all the marks of toil upon him to become king? He was no Crown Prince—Jonathan was the eldest son of the reigning monarch. He was neither the eldest nor the favourite son of any man. He was the youngest son of a farmer named Jesse and because he seemed less promising than his older brothers he had been given the care of the sheep. Anybody with eyes in his head and feet to walk about can watch sheep. The boy did not seem at first glance to have his foot on the ladder nor to possess the elements of royalty.

He became king because he had these five qualities: First of all he showed fidelity in the ordinary duties of every-day life. Here is the summing up of his method—"And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways and the Lord was with him." If a bunch of sheep became his field of opportunity he would do his work in such fashion that no one could do it better. He would lead them in green pastures and by still waters so that they should not want. His rod and his staff would protect them. He would learn the use of sling and stone so that "he could sling," as the record says, "at a hair's breadth and not miss." If a wolf or a bear should attack his flock, he would be able to drive them off.

The simple ordinary duties which belong to keeping sheep or to getting one's lessons at school, to meeting one's obligations in some modest position in office or store, or in doing one's best in a factory or on a farm, become a kind of dress rehearsal for the larger duties which lie ahead. If a man knows his lines and can take his part effect-

ively upon the narrower stage of action he is in line for promotion to a more important rôle. You will find whole regiments of young fellows who drag along, scamping their work and slighting those opportunities which are right at hand. They are saving up their energies to do something splendidly effective week after next. But week after next never comes to such men. It is always to-day, and to-day in their eyes seems ever small.

If those men were already on the quarter-deck as captains of great ocean liners; if they were already bank presidents sitting in handsome offices of their own; if they were already journalists of the first rank writing editorials for metropolitan dailies, they would do what their hands and their minds found to do with their might. But in this day of small things they feel that fidelity and skill would be thrown away. They have mixed up the words of the promise—they think it reads, "You have been unfaithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over everything." When a man is going up-stairs he

must put his foot first on the step which is at the bottom and then take the other steps in order. The same rule holds in the great business of living a man's life and doing a man's work in the world.

The young man who was to become king showed courage and high resolve in the face of danger. There came a day when the Israelites and the Philistines were lined up in battle array on the opposite sides of a valley. The Philistines had their champion fighter in the person of a huge fellow named Goliath. His armour weighed one hundred and fifty pounds. His spear was like a weaver's beam. He stood roaring out his defiance against the armies of Israel, "Choose you a man! Let him come down to me and fight. If he kills me, we will be your servants. If I prevail against him then ye shall be our servants."

After the manner of the Iliad he stood ready to let the issue of the campaign turn upon the result of a solitary combat between himself and any Israelite they might put up against him. Saul, the king of Israel, had

offered to enrich with great wealth the man who would fight that huge Philistine. He had promised to give him the hand of his own daughter, the fair young princess, in marriage, and to make his father's house forever free in Israel. But no Israelite had dared to fight the terrible Goliath.

Then David appeared upon the scene. He had been sent down by his father with ten loaves of fresh bread, with ten cheeses and a supply of parched corn for his brothers who were at the front. He saw this huge Goliath stalking up and down the picket lines between the armies. He cried out in his resentment at the apparent cowardice of his own countrymen, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God!" David was informed that even the promise of high reward offered by the king had not induced an Israelite to face the Philistine.

Then spoke out the voice of faith from the heart of unstained youth! "Let no man's heart fail because of him—thy servant will go and fight this Philistine." The king

remonstrated with him. He pointed out the folly of sending an untrained youth to meet the disciplined man of war. But David insisted that his rough experiences with the lions and the bears which attacked his flock had furnished him the necessary training. The king then offered him his own armour, which would naturally be the best suit of armour in the camp, that the stripling might in some measure be protected. But after trying on this suit of mail David put it aside. "I cannot go with these," he said, "for I have not proved them." He refused the conventional modes of defense, relying upon those weapons which had been tested by experience. He took his sling and five smooth stones from the brook and announced that he was ready for the combat.

It seemed a contest most unequal when the principals were put forth with the Israelites and the Philistines ranged up on either side of the valley to watch the outcome. Goliath was enraged when he saw the boy they had sent against him. "Am I a dog?" he said. And then he cursed David by all

his gods and threatened to feed his flesh to the beasts of the field before an hour had passed. Like many a modern combatant Goliath was mighty with his mouth. His tongue was like a weaver's beam.

The young man was not disturbed. His weapons were taken from the armoury of experience, and his courage came from the same reliable source. "The Lord who delivered me out of the paws of the lion and the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." The moral triumphs of those early years when a boy keeps his life clean and strong become the earnest of the larger victories he is set to win in his mature manhood. The growing boy who disdains to lie or to cheat, to stain his life with dirt or to show himself a coward, will know how to bear himself when the harder tests of middle life assail him.

The young man's religious faith contributed to his courage. It was moral strength pitted against brute force. It was the scornful self-confidence which trusted in a coat of brass and a huge spear measuring

itself against the spirit of faith which became the source of a finer form of valour. "Thou comest to me with sword and spear," David cried, as he saw his foe advancing. "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts whom thou hast defied." His trust in God kept his nerves steady so that he was still able in the presence of that roaring giant to sling stones at a hair's breadth and not miss. His moral passion as he went forth to lift that reproach from the banner of his nation gave strength to his right arm.

The huge Philistine came on, brandishing his spear and roaring out his wrath. David saw the unprotected spot below the visor of the man's helmet. He took one of his five smooth stones and slung it with such force and precision as to strike Goliath full in the forehead, knocking him senseless. He then ran forward and took the huge sword of his enemy and cut off his head holding it aloft as a trophy of his courage. When the Philistines saw their champion fall they fled in terror and the Israelites pursuing them won a notable victory.

How splendid is the quality of moral courage! How kingly is the man who can face all manner of danger undaunted because he knows that his heart is right and his cause is just! He deserves to be crowned. The battle is the Lord's in the last analysis and He saveth not alone with sword and spear.

There are sentiments and principles which become deep-rooted in a nation's life mightier by far than the heaviest battalions. There are habits of thought and long-cherished convictions which constitute a more reliable form of defense than all the ramparts and battlements devised by strategists. A nation of Davids will in the final outcome outmatch any nation of Goliaths with all their swords and spears. And in one's personal life the clear conscience and the heart of faith will bring any man off from any field where he may be sent more than conqueror through Him who loves us.

This young man showed also a fine capacity for friendship with men. "His soul was knit with the soul of Jonathan and he loved him as he loved his own soul." The fine

friendship of a man for a man, or the gracious affection which a woman feels for a woman who is indeed her friend, becomes a noble form of human relationship. Those ties where the charm and power of the sex-impulse has no place have in them a world of moral worth.

It is easy for any man to fall in love with some beautiful woman—it is as easy as rolling off a log, and ever so much more delightful. It is easy for any man to inhale the sweet incense which arises from the devotion of some affectionate woman's heart. But where a man loves a man in an unsullied, unselfish friendship until his soul is knit with the soul of that man in an interlacing and interlocking of interest, then you have that harder, rarer form of human relationship which is rich with promise.

The young chap who is never quite happy with his fellows, who must always have some adoring young woman present in order to be content, is not quite all there. He is a "softy." He is lath and plaster where there should be quartered oak. He has more

sentiment than principle; he has less muscle and more fat than go to the make-up of a virile manhood. The very absence of the glamour and mystery which enters into all attachments between those of opposite sex clears the air for the manifestation of some of those fine forms of fidelity and devotion which belong to friendship at its best.

Here the friendship was the more notable when we recall how the two men were placed. Jonathan was the eldest son of the king, the heir to the throne, the natural successor of Saul. But David by his military prowess had come to be highly esteemed. When he returned victorious from his wars against the enemies of Israel the proud and happy women had sung in the streets, "Saul has slain his thousands, but David has slain his tens of thousands." And David had been privately anointed by Samuel the prophet as a worthy candidate for the throne of Israel.

Jonathan, as the Crown Prince, had the least to gain and the most to lose by protecting the life and ministering to the well-being of this friend who might one day aspire to

the throne. He made his affection a thing resplendent by its sheer unselfishness. He saw that David might increase while he would decrease, yet even so the sky of his affection was unclouded by a single touch of jealousy. How great is that love which envieth not.

And David in turn made his own adequate response to this magnanimous interest. He showed himself in his whole bearing a man worthy of the friendship of a prince of the blood. Heaven be praised for men who can find joy and satisfaction in the friendship of their fellows.

The young man who was destined to become king was generous to his enemies. Saul stood head and shoulders above his fellows, physically speaking, but in his mental and moral stature he was less than knee-high to the man who followed him upon the throne. When he heard the women singing David's praises, "Saul was very wroth—the saying displeased him and he eyed David from that day forward."

When the king saw the fine friendship be-

tween his own son Jonathan and the rising David his heart became as bitter as gall. "Thou son of a perverse, rebellious woman," he cried to the Crown Prince, "thou hast chosen this son of Jesse to thine own confusion." And when David increased year after year in stature, in wisdom, and in favour with God and men, Saul tried repeatedly to kill him. His soul cried out, "Let me feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him."

It is not easy for any man, especially a young man with hot, red blood in his veins and the sense of injustice rankling in his heart, to stand up in the face of hatred and malice and keep sweet about it. "Love your enemies. Bless them who curse you. Do good to them that hate you. Pray for those who despitefully use you." If you are struck upon the cheek take a second blow upon the other cheek rather than strike back in resentment. If a man compels you unjustly to go a mile with him, go two miles rather than seek to be avenged. Take the rules of action constantly from within, from the best instincts of your own heart rather than

have them furnished to you by the evil behaviour of wrong-doers. Allow no man's meanness to master you—allow rather your own nobility to overcome that evil with good.

How easy it is to say it, but to do it—aye, there is the rub! It is so divinely hard to put these fine principles into practice. The soft answer may turn away wrath, but the hot retort comes more readily to the lips. The humane return of good for evil points the way of spiritual advance, but the desire to pay every man back in his own coin with a tip thrown in for good measure is often more natural. The more honour then to the man who has learned that greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city.

When David had Saul within his power he refused to strike. There were months when the young man was hunted through the hills of Judea by the hirelings of the wicked king, as if he had been a mad dog. There came a night when Saul was sleeping in his barricade of wagons. He had around him the three thousand soldiers whom he had led into the

mountains in his mad effort to capture David. The young man had been pursued until he had felt that there was only a step between him and death.

That very night, accompanied only by his armour-bearer, David stole under cover of the darkness into Saul's camp. He presently stood in the tent of the sleeping giant. Here was his enemy lying helpless at his feet! His armour-bearer, knowing the history of that enmity, whispered, "Let me smite him with one blow to the earth! I will not smite the second time." One blow in the dark would suffice to end that murderous career.

And it ought to be remembered that this was in a day when "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was the law of the land. It was esteemed the law of God. The atmosphere was not one of forbearance—the popular heroes were men like Samson and Gideon, women like Deborah and Jael, who did not hesitate to strike down their foes. "Let me smite him," came the whisper in the dark. "One blow will suffice."

But peace hath her victories no less than

war. Mercy has its trophies no less than force. Here was a man who would not avenge himself—he would give place unto wrath knowing that vengeance belongs to God. He was ready to make the bold adventure of undertaking to overcome evil with good.

David would not strike his enemy even though that enemy had been in hot pursuit of him. "Destroy him not," he whispered to his companion-in-arms as he felt him clutching the sword which hung at his side. David's greatest victory was not over Goliath, the Philistine giant—it was over himself, over that spirit of revenge which might so easily have ruled his heart in that dark, hard hour.

He had in splendid measure the quality of mercy which the poet sings.

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy."

We are discovering those qualities which entitled this young man to be crowned as king.

Finally, he was a man of genuine piety. We read in one place that he was "a man after God's own heart." The statement has been a puzzle to many an honest mind. This man who in his later years dipped his hands in the blood of his foes and fell on one occasion into the grossest sin with an attractive woman, this fellow a man after God's own heart!

He was not an angel. As we go up and down through history we find men and not angels. We find men with mud on their boots, with blisters on their hands, and with scars on their souls. George Washington owned slaves. John Calvin burned Servetus at the stake. Peter the Apostle denied his Lord three times in a single night—he denied with an oath. If you are looking for moral perfection you will have to look somewhere else than on this earth.

David was a man after God's own heart, not because he never did wrong, but because

when he fell down he got up again. He got up again faced towards God and not away from Him, faced away from the evil which had thrown him down and not towards a further advance in wrong-doing. "The wise make of their moral failures ladders by which they climb towards Heaven. The foolish make of their moral failures graves wherein they bury all their highest hopes."

When Oscar Wilde was imprisoned in Reading gaol for his own wretched wrong-doing he wrote that strangely human document, "De Profundis." It was a message "out of the depths." In that book he used this striking sentence which I have never forgotten since the first time I read it, "The highest moment in a man's career may be the hour when he kneels in the dust and beats upon his breast and tells all the sins of his life."

"God be merciful to me, a sinner." "Have mercy upon me, O God. Against Thee have I sinned. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." This is all that any honest man can

say in the presence of his Maker, and when he does say it honestly he is on his way to the divine favour.

David was a man of faith and of prayer; he was a man of deep, sweet feeling and of spiritual longing. In all his better moments when he was truly himself his heart hungered after righteousness and his soul was athirst for the living God. A man of that moral mood and build is much more after God's own heart, even though he may upon occasion be betrayed by the fervour of his nature into wrong-doing, than is the coldly correct man who has never felt enough of warm-hearted devotion to anything to raise the spiritual temperature a single degree.

I do not know how many of these Psalms came from the lips or the pen of David. No one knows—not many in all probability. But I know that these words represent experiences which were David's beyond a peradventure. "The Lord is my rock and my fortress, my deliverer and my saviour. In my distress I called upon Him and He heard me. He drew me out of many waters and

He brought me forth into a large place. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

He came to the throne at the age of thirty, and he reigned over Israel for forty years. His name was handed down in human history as that of the greatest king that Israel ever had. He never could have done it but for the fact that he had in his heart faith and hope and love towards God and towards his fellow men. He was a man of deep and genuine piety.

When William IV of England passed away there was a young girl of sixteen named Victoria who was spending the night in Kensington Palace. Word was suddenly brought to her that the King was dead and that she was Queen of England. She immediately fell upon her knees imploring divine help and guidance in the discharge of the high duties which had been thrust upon her. May it not be that this was one secret of her beneficent reign which lasted for more than sixty years? The rulers who begin the

ascent of their thrones upon their knees rise high because their eyes are upon that Great White Throne which is the final seat of all authority and of all blessing.

Here then were the leading traits in that young man who became king! In his early life when he was nothing but a shepherd boy he showed fidelity in the ordinary duties of every-day life. He showed courage and high resolve in the presence of danger. He had a fine capacity for joyous and enduring friendship with his brother men. He was great-hearted and magnanimous to his foes, even when he had them utterly in his power. He was a man of simple, genuine faith in the living God.

Whether you are living in Palestine or in Connecticut, in the tenth century before Christ or in the twentieth century after, are not these the qualities which are sure to be crowned? Are not these the traits which make any man kingly in his bearing and in the whole content of his inner life?

Set your hearts upon those traits and make them your own! Fight the good

fight! Keep your faith! Finish your course with honour and you will find at the end of it laid up for you a crown of righteousness, which God gives to every man who serves Him aright.

IV

The Young Man Who Was Born to the Purple

"IN the year that King Uzziah died"—it was more than a date, it was an experience! The king had been a wise and good ruler. He had served his country well for fifty-two long years. He showed an interest in the welfare of his people—"He loved husbandry and dug wells for them in the desert." He caused vineyards to be planted on the slopes of Carmel and he increased the herds of cattle which grazed in the lowlands. He fortified his capital by building towers at the valley gate and at the turning of the wall in Jerusalem.

His reign was beneficent, but now he was dead, and this warm-hearted young patriot felt that his heart was overwhelmed. He and his fellow citizens must now plan for the

future of their country without the guidance and inspiration of this great king.

But "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord." There came something more than a personal experience of disappointment. There came the emergence of a new and higher form of faith. This young man saw the earthly majesty of this wise and good king go down in utter defeat. In some strange way the king contracted leprosy. During all the closing years of his reign he suffered from the crawling inroads of that loathsome disease. By the stern requirements of the Jewish law he was banished from his own capital. He was compelled to live outside the city and to reign by deputy. He finally died a lingering and horrible death.

And in that dread hour the young man saw the heavenly majesty of the King of kings resplendent and enduring. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord, high and lifted up, sitting upon His throne and His glory filled the temple." The spirit of hero-worship was passing over into religious faith.

Let me study with you the effect of this crisis in the life of his nation upon this young man who was born to the purple. He possessed all those advantages which go with wealth, social position, and education. We have here no rough man of the hills like Elijah, the Tishbite, rudely dressed and rude in speech. We have here no man with the smell of the fields in his garments like Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa.

Isaiah belonged to the fortunate class. He lived on Fifth Avenue. He had an assured social position which gave him ready access to the court and to the presence of the king. He was familiar with the customs and the costumes of fashionable society, as we find in that chapter where he openly rebukes the showy extravagance of the idle rich. He was well educated—he had that literary skill which comes only to those who are well trained. In all the Old Testament you will find nothing finer than the sweep and finish of some of this young prophet's public utterances. He was one to whom five talents had been given where other men were

struggling along with one apiece. He therefore owed to society what might be called the debt of privilege. It is a fixed charge upon the lives of those who sit above the salt. It has a right to insist upon full payment. "To whom much is given, of him will much be required."

It is for every man to ask himself: "How much do I eat up in my generous mode of life? How much in food and dress, in housing and furnishing, in motor cars and yachts, in travel and in recreation? How much do I consume in those provisions which I make for a wider culture through books, pictures, music and the like?" What is your average intake of this world's good things? That measure of consumption will indicate the measure of your responsibility. If you are born to the purple and fare sumptuously in all these ways then the world has a right to demand that you shall render back in corresponding measure that useful service which is your plain duty.

In that effective cartoon which Jesus drew of the Rich Man and Lazarus, it was the un-

paid debt of privilege which brought about the loss of a soul. Jesus showed the two men in this world, one of them living in a palace, clothed with purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day; the other in rags dying at the Rich Man's gate, hungry and full of sores. Then Jesus showed the two men in the next world, Lazarus the beggar now in Abraham's bosom, and the son of good fortune enduring torment.

There is no hint that the Rich Man had gained a penny of his wealth wrongfully; no charge of lying or theft, of murder or adultery is laid at his door. He was damned not by the wicked things he had done, but for the lack of that generous and humane service which he had left undone. His sin was that of selfish indifference. The way to perdition is paved with moral neglect. The debt of privilege can no more be escaped than death or taxes. To whom much is given, of him will much be required. And a full sense of that responsibility was brought home to this well-endowed young man in the year the great king died.

The fortunate young man stood out in the open confessing his sense of moral need. There in the place of worship in that high and serious mood which followed upon the death of the king, he caught a fresh vision of God. "I saw the Lord high and lifted up, sitting upon His throne. I saw Him surrounded with the winged seraphs. And one of them cried to another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts! The whole earth is full of His glory."

The very sight of the unstained purity of Him "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid," brought this young man to his knees. He knelt in the dust and beat upon his breast and told the sins of his life. "Woe is me, I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. And mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

The man who has no sense of sin has little sense of any sort. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves or else we lie. Where is the man who can stand up in the presence

of those who know him and say, "Every deed that I have done was done in honour and integrity. Every word that has fallen from my lips has been spoken in truth and in kindliness. Every desire which I have harboured in my soul has been one upon which the eye of my Maker might rest with approval."

Can you say that? I am frank to confess that I cannot. I have done wrong. I feel my need of the divine mercy. I want forgiveness, cleansing and renewal. And every man who is honest enough to look himself in the face, without flinching, will be moved to make the same confession. It is up out of those moments of contrition when men are humbled and broken before God that the spiritual impulses come which are to beat back the forces of evil and make this earth at last as fair as the sky.

I care not what the man's outward station may be—he may live on the Avenue or he may live in the slums; he may be clothed in purple or he may be dressed in rags; he may wear a Phi Beta Kappa key or he may

be so untaught that he has to make his mark when he signs a mortgage—in any event here is a prayer which will fit his lips—it fits every pair of lips: "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

In that one brief sentence we have the four main terms of religious experience. "God," the object of religion, the ground of all finite existence, the basis of all our hope! "Me," the human soul, the subject of religion, the field where the work of religion is to be wrought out! "Sin," the obstacle to religion, the source of all our moral failure, the cause of our alienation from God! And "mercy," the agent of religion, the form of energy which accomplishes our recovery! God be merciful to me, a sinner.

This young man of good fortune stood up in the temple in the presence of his fellows making his open confession of moral need. "Woe is me for I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips."

In that very hour when this honest confession came from his lips his life was cleansed by the direct action of the divine spirit. He

saw one of the winged seraphs flying towards him through the open spaces of Heaven. The angel took a live coal from the altar and laid it upon the lips of this young man. He cried out as he did it, saying, "Thine iniquity is taken away. Thy sin is purged." Isaiah was no more a man of unclean lips—he could now speak with that Lord whose name is Holy as friend speaks with friend.

We have this profound moral experience dressed up in those grand, Oriental robes which were dear to the people of that region. But when you strip away the silk, the lace, and the feathers of Eastern imagery, and get down to the bare, warm truth, this is what you find—a man whose sense of moral lack had prompted that open confession, cleansed in that high hour by the direct action of the divine spirit upon his soul.

Here is that which is basic and fundamental in all religious life! I wonder if we have not been tempted in recent years to obscure this vital experience. We have held those two big words, "Heredity" and "Environment," so close to our eyes as to blind

us, oftentimes, to the larger vision of that which is superhuman in earthly experience.

It is possible for the inner life of a man to be so wrought upon by the action of the spirit of God that the corrupt nature is cleansed, the weak nature is made strong, the selfish disposition is transformed into benign love.

It matters little how you go about it, if you go with sincere faith. You may seek for that renewal through the regenerating influence of the Sacraments dear to the heart of the Romanist and the High Churchman. If you find it there, it will be because Christ is within the Sacrament. You may seek for it in those profound emotional reactions which come at the Methodist mourners' bench. If you find it there, it will be because the spirit of Christ was operating through those feelings. You may find it as you make an about face, turning away from that which is evil and making Christian duty your supreme choice in the quiet of your own room. If you find it there, it will be because Christ was present in those movements of your

inner life. The woman was healed in the Gospel story by touching the hem of Christ's garment because Christ was within that garment.

If any man will seek for moral renewal at the hands of God he will find. If he will knock at any one of these doors it will open. Here is the Gospel as it stands recorded on the pages of the Old Testament—"The spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee and thou shalt be turned into another man." Here is the same Gospel as it stands recorded on the pages of the New Testament—"If any man is in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away and all things are become new."

In the joy of moral renewal this well-born, well-reared, well-trained young man gave himself in eager consecration to the highest he saw. "I heard the voice of the Lord say, Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me."

His nation, now robbed of its great king by the hand of disease, was facing a crisis. The national church to which he belonged

was steeped in formalism and insincerity. The divine voice was uttering a heartfelt lament over the unfaithfulness of the chosen people. "Israel doth not know! My people do not think. The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint."

There was a loud cry for men of large build with wise heads and sound hearts to furnish moral leadership. And in the face of that demand this son of good fortune did not allow the divine spirit to go out into the highways and hedges in order to compel some sort of man, any sort of man, to come in that the ranks might be filled. He answered to his name with a clear-cut consecration of himself. "Here am I, send me."

When war comes to any country, there are rich men who give money, millions of it, that the war chest may be full. There are great manufacturers who promptly place their plants at the disposal of the government for the making of munitions. There are ship owners who turn over their vessels to the Navy that they may be sent to do business in the great waters of national defense.

There are wise men who think hard upon the problems of finance and statecraft that they may provide that counsel which is more precious than rubies. All this is in the highest degree praiseworthy.

But the only men who give what Lincoln called at Gettysburg "the last full measure of devotion" are the men who give themselves. These men do not go on horseback nor in automobiles. They walk. They eat the hardtack. They sleep on the ground. They dig the trenches and fight in them. They march out at the word of command to be shot at. They keep right on doing those plain things until the war is ended and victory achieved. These are the men who awaken our warmest feeling of admiration and gratitude. "Here am I, send me"—nothing can take the place of that!

In that sterner war where there is no discharge, in that age-long, world-wide fight against the evils of earth this same sound principle holds. Money is needed; counsel is needed; organization and administrative ability are needed. The bringing in of that

kingdom which is not meat and drink, nor shot and shell, but righteousness and peace and joy in the divine spirit, requires all these fine forms of effort. But nothing can ever take the place of that personal consecration of each man's own soul to the service of the living God.

In that high hour when Isaiah saw the God of things as they are, high and lifted up, sitting on His throne, he did not say, "Here are any number of fine people, send them. Here is a man who could perform the task better than I—send him." He said what every man must say who means to stand right in the Day of Judgment, "Here am I, send me."

He was the son of good fortune, and his life was bright and rich with many an advantage. But this did not prompt him to claim any sort of exemption from the call for volunteers. His vision of the awful difference between the earthly majesty of that king who sank so swiftly into a leper's grave and the heavenly majesty which rose above it sovereign and eternal, made him feel that

nothing would suffice but the gift of himself.

What shall it profit a man, this man, that man, any man, to gain the largest measure of earthly success you may choose to name, if in the process he loses himself, his real self, his best self, his enduring self? What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but feels within himself a capacity for higher things unrealized? In the great outcome nothing really matters save the devotion of the personal life to the highest ends.

In the year 1840 near the city of Louvain a child was born, who came of good stuff. He was educated for a business career, and there in prosperous little Belgium the outlook at that time for wealth, for social position, and for a life of joy was very bright. But at the age of eighteen this boy offered himself for the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. He joined the Society of the Sacred Heart. He went out to the Hawaiian Islands as a missionary and was ordained as a priest in the city of Honolulu.

He was at once impressed with the sad condition of the leper settlement on the island of Molokai. He resolved to give his life to those poor, diseased, horror-stricken people. He knew that to live among them would mean banishment from his ordinary associations and the loss of all possible preferment in the church. He knew that he might himself contract that terrible disease and suffer a lingering, painful, frightful death. "No matter," he cried, "I am going." And he went.

He not only preached to those lepers the Gospel of the Son of God and ministered to them in spiritual things—his own labours and his appeals to the Hawaiian government secured for them better dwellings, an improved water supply, and a more generous provisioning of the unhappy settlement. For five years he worked alone, but for the occasional assistance of a priest who came to the colony for a single day. He finally succumbed to the dread disease of leprosy and in his forty-ninth year died a martyr to humane devotion. His name was Father

Damien, and he shed fresh luster upon the Christian ministry.

The young man who was born to the purple, called now to be a prophet of God, seized upon the vital elements of religion and uttered them with power. "What does it mean to be religious?" men were asking. Some of the dull, blind priests of that day were saying, "It means sacrifice and burnt offering. It means the careful and showy observance of the forms of worship." Israel did not know; the people did not think.

Then this young prophet gave them the word of God with an edge on it. He showed them the folly of all those outward signs of devotion apart from the inward spirit of righteousness. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? Who hath required this at your hands? When you spread forth your hands I will hide my eyes. When you make many prayers I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean. Put away the evil of your doings. Cease to do evil, learn to do

well. Then though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

"Salvation by righteousness—this is the message of the Old Testament," Matthew Arnold used to say. "Righteousness through Jesus Christ," this is the message of the New Testament! And this nineteenth century man of letters was but echoing the words which fell from the lips of those prophets in the eighth century before Christ.

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" said Micah. "Will the Lord be pleased with a thousand rams or with ten thousand rivers of oil? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."

"Seek justice," Isaiah said; "relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land. If ye refuse and rebel ye shall be devoured." This was the heart of his message. It was the call of God to personal righteousness.

He represents the Almighty as sitting upon the throne of the universe, summoning His people into friendly conference with Him. "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord." Religion is not a thing of magic. There is no sleight-of-hand or hocus-pocus in the benefits it seeks to confer. Religion is rational and moral. It is a reasoned form of intercourse between an intelligent and moral being who is finite and the Intelligent and Moral Being who is Infinite. Its benefits are to be realized in that direct impress of the spirit of God upon the soul of the man who has made an intelligent and honest approach to his Maker.

The young prophet saw his country threatened with disaster from both sides. He saw upon the south the selfish and cruel designs of Egypt. He saw the encroachments of mighty Assyria from the north. He saw the madness of those Israelites who thought they could combine wickedness and worship, the observance of religious forms with lives of moral unconcern. And in that hour the truths he lifted before them were "The

majesty and authority of God, the everlasting obligation of personal righteousness, the certainty of the ultimate triumph of God's Kingdom over the wrath of man." These were the mighty truths by which he sought to inspire the hearts of men to do their duty, come what might.

Have we not great need at this very hour of just such men! It has been given to you and to me to live through one of the great, searching crises of human history. The world has never seen a struggle so gigantic. We have been patient for more than two years with a certain nation across the sea—patient clear up to the border of what has seemed to some of our neighbours like a lazy acquiescence in lawlessness. We have seen that nation referring contemptuously to her own treaties as mere scraps of paper, and then openly disregarding her solemn obligations.

We saw the outrage perpetrated upon Belgium, an outrage which men who know their histories better than I know mine are saying will go down as the greatest crime in the annals of the race. We saw the drown-

ing of hundreds of helpless women and children in the sinking of the *Lusitania* without warning and in flat defiance of international law. We saw the judicial murder of women like Edith Cavell and of men like Captain Fryatt. We have seen the Zeppelins engaged in the dastardly business of hurling down bombs upon unfortified towns for the killing of old women and little children—heretofore when decent nations have gone to war men have fought with men. We have seen thousands of helpless Armenians butchered by the Moslem allies of that so-called Christian power,—it is all but universally believed, with its own connivance and under its direction. We have witnessed a frightful record of brutality and outrage, investigated and established by the competent testimony of such men as James Bryce and Cardinal Mercier. We have seen the sinking of hospital ships loaded with wounded men and the sinking of relief ships carrying provisions to the famine-stricken children of Belgium, no matter what flag they flew, or what cargo they bore.

We have had our own rights as a neutral trampled upon by that government with the arrogant assumption that her necessities knew no law. And now to crown it all we have detected the official representatives of that country with protests of friendship upon their false lips actually plotting with Mexico and seeking to extend that plot to Japan with the unholy purpose of destroying the peace between this country and its neighbours.

The men of our country who have red blood in their veins and the sense of justice in their hearts are saying, "How long, O Lord, how long!" War is a terrible thing and no honest man ever speaks lightly of war. But there are things which are worse than war. The loss of all capacity for moral indignation is worse. The easy, lazy, cowardly acquiescence in lawlessness and crime is worse. The loss of the readiness to sacrifice one's very life, if need be, for those ends which are just and right, is infinitely worse.

There are interests which are worth fighting for and, if need be, they are worth dying

for. The sanctity of womanhood and the safety of little children, the security of those interests which are essential to human well-being and the protection of our homes, the honour and integrity of our country, and the maintenance of those majestic principles of righteousness which underlie all social advance—these ends are worth dying for. If these high ends can be secured by persuasion and moral appeal, well and good. But if they cannot, if their very existence is threatened by lawlessness and hate, then let men of sound mind and honest heart stand ready to do battle for the right.

In these hours of stress which have come upon our country, we have need of men who possess the necessary moral courage to stand forth and meet the crisis. There is a loud call everywhere for those who are prepared to face duty without flinching. It is for every man to say touching his own measure of ability, "Here am I, send me."

If the cause of democracy is not to fail in those hard years which will come at the close of this war, there is need not only of wise

and honest leaders—there is need of ranks upon ranks of plain men who are ready to give their best strength to the service of that government which is "of the people, for the people, and by the people."

"O beautiful, my country, ours once more,
What were our lives without thee;
What all our lives to save thee.
We reck not what we give thee,
We will not dare to doubt thee,
But ask whatever else and we will dare."

V

The Young Man Who Changed the History of the World

WHY do you write it 1917? "April 1, 1917," that was the way you wrote it this afternoon in your letter to her.

There was a time when it was not so. The Hebrews were dating their calendars from what they supposed to have been the period of the creation. The Romans reckoned their time from the founding of the city on the seven hills. The Greeks reckoned their time from the first Olympic games.

But to-day if you meet a Hebrew, or an Italian, or a Greek in any part of the world and ask him, "What year is it?" he will reply instantly, "Nineteen seventeen." It is just that long since a certain Child was born in Bethlehem of Judea.

How strange it is, when you come to think

of it, that the birth of a child in an out-of-the-way village in Palestine should change the calendars of the world! We find in this commonplace fact a prophecy of His radical transforming power in every department of life. He was destined to take the moral government of the race upon His shoulder as none other ever has. He was to alter the flow of the spiritual currents in human society and ultimately to change the history of the world.

He did it all while He was still a young man. He was only thirty-three years old when they put Him to death upon the Cross. He had used thirty of those thirty-three years in quiet preparation for the great tasks which were to come. No wonder the three years of which we know so much were mighty when we think of the thirty years of preparation standing behind them! Ten years of training and discipline for one of public action! Ten days of study and devotion for one day of healing, redemptive effort! Ten hours of silence and prayer before God for one hour of speech in the ears of men!

He did it all in His youth and when He died at the age of thirty-three He did not look down and say, "I have failed because My life is cut off all too soon." He looked up and said, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

How marvellous was the life of this young man who changed the history of the world! If we could get away from the idea that He is a stained-glass window or a marble statue or a lovely story in a book which most men seldom read—if we could only see Him as He was, the Word made flesh, real, warm, alive, our hearts would leap.

He was born in the manger of a stable. He grew up in a carpenter's home and in a carpenter's shop. He never saw the inside of a college, yet somehow He learned to think straight and to speak as never man spake. He lived with the birds and the flowers, the trees, the hills and the stars. He thought deeply upon the interests and needs of men until He knew what was in man and needed not that any should tell Him—He told them. He looked up with pure eyes and a pure

heart until He saw God. Therefore, when He spoke His word was with power; and when He lived His life was with power; and when He stretched forth His hand, His touch had healing in it.

His mind was exceedingly broad. He had never been outside the borders of His own little country, which is about the size of the State of New Hampshire. He had never seen the mighty cities in Egypt to the south of Him, nor Antioch in Syria to the north. He had never looked upon Athens nor upon Rome. The man who thinks Broadway, New York, is the center of the solar system would have called Him provincial. His feet knew nothing save the narrow streets of Jerusalem and the still narrower lanes of Galilee.

Yet He moved about with a dream of world-wide empire in His head and the vision of a Kingdom Everlasting in His heart. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." When He sent forth His disciples to do the work He had taught them to do, this is the way their commission read:

"Go into all the world. Make disciples of all nations. Baptize everybody into My name and the name of the Father." He had courage—think of His standing there, a young peasant in little Palestine, talking about a world-wide empire over which He would rule by His own unseen spirit!

He found little in His environment to add strength to His hope. He lived under a government which was tyrannical and corrupt. The Jewish Church to which He belonged was formal and lifeless. He faced a society which was ruled by men like Herod, and by women like the shameless wife of Herod, who cut off a poor man's head for telling her the truth about herself. He saw the religious leaders of His day straining at gnats of difficulty in their formal worship and then swallowing camels of moral fault in their every-day conduct. The situation might well have frightened the boldest heart. It never frightened Him. "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me," He said at the beginning of His ministry, "because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He

hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, and to set at liberty them that are bruised." And when He came to the close of His ministry, He said, "Behold, I make all things new, a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." He was undaunted.

He was an optimist. By that I do not mean one of those silly, short-sighted individuals who goes about saying, "Look always on the bright side." Jesus looked at both sides. He went about with His eyes open. He saw everything. He saw the struggle and the sorrow of human life and felt it as if it had been all His own. He looked upon the tired, sad, sin-stained face of the race. He knew it as He knew His own face, and He saw the heart of pain which had made it so. He was no schoolboy shouting himself hoarse in a thoughtless enthusiasm which had never tested its strength against the graver difficulties of life. He saw it all, felt it all, understood it all, yet He lived and died in a great, sweet, serene hope for the race. You cannot find

one hateful, cynical or despairing word falling from His lips.

He stood once where the shadow of the Cross was already drawing a black line across His path. He had twelve disciples to whom for the past two years He had given the best part of His time, His thought and His love. One of them had already betrayed Him, bargaining away his poor measure of loyalty for thirty pieces of silver. In the next hour another disciple would deny Him three times over with an oath. Another would doubt Him straight in the face of all those pledges of genuineness which they had received at first hand. And when the hour of trial struck His disciples would all show themselves cowards and quitters.

Even so, this young man did not despair. "Be of good cheer," He cried. "I have overcome the world." He was speaking in anticipation, but He was so sure of it that He used the past tense as of a thing accomplished. "I have overcome the world." He had kindled a fire which would never go

out. He had lodged a bit of yeast in the heart of the race which would finally leaven the whole lump. He had saturated a few men with His ideas and spirit, and they would set in motion a process which one day would cause every knee to bow before Him and every tongue to confess that He is Lord.

He was to change the history of the world —how did He go about it? In the first place He changed men's thoughts about God. Men are influenced by their environment—they are transformed by the renewing of their minds. They are moulded by the thoughts they think and the desires they cherish. As a man thinketh in his heart touching the things that matter, so he becomes.

This is true as regards all our prevailing habits of mind, but the potency of right thought is to be found at its best when we come to a man's thought of God. How shall we think about ultimate reality? What is behind all these changing, passing phenomena? Who is back of it all? Is anybody? If so, is he wise or blind? Is he

good or evil or morally indifferent? Does he mean anything by it all, or is he only an unreasoning, purposeless force? You cannot ask yourself or your fellows a more important question than this—"How shall we think about God?"

Men had been filling their minds with all sorts of wild and foolish guesses about God. This young man placed upon the lips of the race and within its heart that great word "Father." "When ye pray say, 'Our Father.'" Begin with those words on your lips, with that thought in your mind and with the filial spirit in your heart. When you worship "Worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." When you would turn away from the evil of your life say, "I will arise and go to my Father." When you want assurance say, "No man can pluck me out of my Father's hand." When you come to die say, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Death is the act of a tired child falling back into the arms of his Father. He showed us the Father and it sufficed us.

This great truth was the heart of this young man's message to the race—God is our Father. God combines the strength and the tenderness, the authority and the devotion, the responsible control and the capacity for self-sacrifice which belong to fatherhood at its best. Take the highest you have ever seen in fatherhood and raise it to the *nth* power, and then trust that, for that is God.

How many of you believe that? It is the easiest thing in the world to say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth," but do you really believe it? Are you striving to live it? If God is your Father, then you are His children, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ! Your interests are His interests. Your life and His life, your destiny and His destiny, are not things apart—they are all one.

In the light of that great overarching, underlying, interpenetrating truth, there is no duty more commanding, no privilege more resplendent than that of living daily and hourly in the filial spirit before Him. When a man really believes that, he goes

about saying by word and by deed, "I am not alone, the Father is with me. I come not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. I must be about my Father's business." When that great sublime truth is set within the heart of the race, as it was set within the heart of this young man, it changes the history of the world.

He also changed men's thoughts about goodness. What does it mean to be good? When may we call any man good? There were men who felt that being good meant obeying the law, keeping the rules, ordering one's life in accordance with the endless specifications outlined in the Sacred Books. If a man could get through the day without having gotten off the path for an inch, then he might be esteemed good. And the race groaned under the burdens which this system had bound upon the consciences of men. It was all outward, formal, mechanical, impossible.

Jesus set Himself against that whole conception and method of goodness. "Except your righteousness exceeds that," He said to

the men of His day, "you will not in any wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Goodness must be inward, vital, spontaneous. A good tree brings forth good fruit. It cannot otherwise. It does it as naturally as a bird sings. Therefore, make the tree good and let the fruit come as it will—it will be all right. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good deeds. He does it spontaneously. Therefore, make the heart right and let the man do as he pleases. Love God with an honest heart and love your neighbours as well as yourself, and then do as you like. Love works no ill, either Godward or manward; therefore, love is the fulfilling of all law. Here is the great underlying principle of all righteousness to which all our ethical considerations must be adjusted. As men rise from the practice of keeping outward rules into the more exacting but more joyous liberty of the spirit, they become genuinely good.

In the third place Jesus put within our reach a power which would change our hearts. If you are made as I am, and as I

have found hundreds of other men, you feel oftentimes that your life is weak and thin and mean. You do not love God with an honest heart and strive to be what He would have you. You do not love your neighbours as you ought, and give expression to that love in unselfish action. You lag back when you ought to be forging ahead. You lie down where you ought to climb. You muddle along in a dull, commonplace way when your aspirations and your high resolves should be mounting up with wings like eagles.

When you are frankly honest with yourself you say, as I have said to myself, and as Paul said before us, "The good that I would I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!"

Here was One who knew that men are weak and thin and mean, yet He believed that every one of them through faith in Him could have a life strong and rich and fine. He actually believed that men who have bumped their way clear down to the bottom

of the moral stairs could climb up again. He believed that the woman of the street, whom the bigots of that day were ready to stone, could "go and sin no more," her sins forgiven because she loved much.

The publicans and harlots would go into the Kingdom—they would go in, Jesus said, ahead of some of those respectable, cold-hearted Pharisees who were scandalized at such talk. He knew the capacity for moral renewal which lies in waiting in every heart, and He knew His own power to call that capacity into effective action. "I am the door," He said, "to newness of life. By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. He shall go in and out and find pasture." Security, liberty, sustenance, they would all be his!

My mind goes back to a man in one of my former parishes. He kept a little store, but he neglected his business in order to get drunk. The wolf was often at his door. He had a good wife and two lovely daughters, but he had broken their hearts by his evil ways. He would become so intoxicated that

he would not know his own name nor the street he lived on. When he was coming out of such debauches he would go about dirty, blear-eyed, trembling, asking every man he met to give him money to get another drink.

Then there came a day when that man's heredity was not changed, his environment was not changed, but his heart was changed. He put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and was turned into another man. He became at once sober, reliable, industrious, affectionate, aspiring. He put a smile on his wife's face which is there yet. He began to take care of his store and of his family. He became an honoured and useful citizen, chosen to positions of trust by his fellow men. He has now gone to his reward, but if he hears what I am saying he would tell you that it is all true. He would tell you also that he owed this change to the transforming power of the Son of God, the Saviour of men.

How the world changes and for the better! When Jesus Christ was here they said of

Him, "He receiveth sinners and eateth with them." They said it with a sneer. When William Booth, the head of the Salvation Army, did the same thing they said of him, "He receiveth sinners," but they regarded it as the glory of his life. The first century saw the Son of Man scorned and spat upon for receiving sinners and eating with them. The twentieth century saw William Booth received at court by King Edward VII and honoured with a degree from Oxford University for receiving sinners. The world moves; there is sunrise everywhere and the promise of a brighter day! And this great change has been wrought by the One who brought upon the earth a finer form of spiritual energy to renew the hearts of men.

And finally this young man set in the sky of human aspiration a fixed star of hope. You cannot change the world by scolding it. You cannot change the world by petting it. You must set before its eyes a vision of God and in its heart a passion for goodness, and in its will a form of strength that will not accept defeat, and in its sky a star of hope.

> "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love
> Whom we that have not seen Thy face
> By faith and faith alone embrace
> Believing where we cannot prove."

Jesus Christ has done that for us all—"Believing where we cannot prove!" He has taught us how to hope and to trust and in that sign to conquer.

He tasted the whole human situation for every man. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and tried by those ordeals which culminated on Calvary. "In this world," He said, "ye shall have tribulation." The word He used means literally "pressure." Life is not all music and refreshments. Every honest life must be lived under pressure. It is compelled to do its work under the steady weight of duty, obligation, responsibility. It is compelled to fight a good fight in order to keep its faith and finish its course.

In the end that is the making of any life. Steam does all its work under pressure. Turn it loose in the air to go where it will and it becomes useless. In this world we

must live under pressure. But Jesus bade men face it all undaunted and radiant. He planted in their lives an eternal hope, "Be of good cheer. I have overcome—you can."

He knew that His own purposes were entirely right—"I do always those things that please the Father." He knew that He was strongly entrenched in the love and confidence of those who knew Him best. He knew that the great moral order was on His side and that He could afford to wait for results. In that high confidence He moved ahead as serene as the sun shining in its strength. "Be of good cheer," He cried, when He stood within a hundred yards of Calvary.

His victory was not meant to be exceptional, it was meant to be representative. It was to be shared and repeated by all those who walk in fellowship with Him. How much it means when a man is making his way through some dark forest or climbing some stiff mountainside to find the faintest sort of a trail. "Other men have passed

this way," he cries, "and what men have done, men can do again."

Here is a trail of spiritual victory, reaching on and up through all manner of untoward situations! His own patient, bleeding feet marked it out and thousands of His faithful followers have traversed it in their turn. "Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can tribulation or distress or persecution or famine, or peril or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither life nor death nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

When the long, hard, dark days come it means everything to a man to know that there is that within him which cannot go down in final defeat. His real life, his best life, his enduring life, is hid with Christ in God, and that life will yet have its way.

The earth is another place when it is seen

to have a sky above it. This earthly life is another thing when it is seen to have a heaven above it and beyond it. We are saved by hope, by the hope of life abundant, life enduring, life eternal, which shines on and on, no matter how earth's clouds may come and go.

When all else seems to fail we look up and hear this young man say, " Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you that where I am there ye may be. Be of good cheer, I have overcome and by My grace you will."

Here then is my case! Here is my own tribute of loyalty and affection for that young man who changed the history of the world. He did it by changing men's thoughts about God—" To us there is but one God, the Father." He did it by changing men's conception of goodness—to be good is to be like Him, simple, genuine, spontaneous, in our love and practice of the

right life. He did it by changing the hearts of men from within—"If any man is in Christ he is a new creature." He did it by setting in our human sky a fixed star of hope to shine on until the day dawns and the shadows flee away.

In the face of it all how can any man of sense and conscience do less than follow Him and act with Him until His will is done on earth as it is done in Heaven!

"If Jesus Christ is a man
And only a man, I say
That of all mankind I cleave to Him
And to Him will I cleave alway.

"If Jesus Christ be God
And the only God, I swear
I will follow Him through Heaven and Hell,
The earth, the sea, the air."

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